

## The Posterity of Hiding:

### A Psychoanalytic Reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank*

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#### Abstract

Focusing on Anne Frank's diary, this essay brings to the foreground a reading that has continually been blue pencilled, unwrapping the way Anne's localised position as a Jew in hiding is connected with her psychic process of exploring her desires as well as her voice as a woman. As this analysis reveals, Anne's relationships in the Annex and her psychic development are in fact symbolically linked to her being chained in hiding, away from the social realm. Peeping at the world through a key hole from her marginal standpoint, she experiences a different process of growing into womanhood, whereby she reclaims the legitimacy of her voice and challenges basic conceptions of gender and sexuality.

*Keywords:* Anne Frank, psychoanalysis, hiding, adolescent sexuality, voice, gender, Holocaust

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My recent encounter with *The Diary of Anne Frank* was an enlightening return to a familiar childhood reading scene and one that confronted me with the intersectional orbits of my own situated reality as a Jewish woman living in Europe. Revisiting one's childhood landscape is an experience accompanied by a spatial distortion in which playful spaces from the past may turn narrow, crowded and condensed. As with the chronicles of the diary itself, encountering Anne's story as an adult brought to light not only her words but also the multiplicity of forces that have kept her silenced, rendering her un-spokenness, her censorships, her oppressions. Out of the diarist's hiding space in the secret annex, the abundant written materials seem to enclose a smaller space for Anne Frank's words. From being so deeply enclosed within her historically and politically situated attic, Anne has been mobilised out of her prison into a universality of "a normal teenage girl." Readings of the diary, particularly psychoanalytic readings, have de-situated her experience in a way that has repudiated, foreclosed and repressed significant parts of her story.

This essay brings to the foreground a reading of the diary that has continually been blue pencilled, unwrapping the way Anne's localised position as a Jew in hiding is connected with her psychic process of exploring her desires as well as her voice as a woman. As I will show, Anne's relationships in the Annex and her psychic development are in fact symbolically linked to her being chained in hiding, away from the social realm. Peeping at the world through a key hole, Anne occupies a socially liminal position. From her marginal standpoint, she experiences a

different process of growing into womanhood, whereby she is able to reclaim the legitimacy of her voice and to challenge basic conceptions of gender and sexuality.

### **Introduction: Displacing Anne Frank**

Since the diary was first published in Dutch in 1947, two years after Anne's death in Bergen-Belsen, it has received widespread attention. Her story has become part of the curriculum in numerous schools around the world and has been translated to more than 60 languages. While at first glance it seems that in the post-war reality Anne's point of view, her experience of life in hiding, has been released from its concealment, a second, closer reading reveals that in the multiple publications of the diary, the original text has been censored, modified and mitigated. Significant parts of her narrative were omitted, neglected or politically denied. As Cynthia Ozick elaborates, "almost every hand that has approached the diary with the well-meaning intention of publicizing it has contributed to the subversion of history" (78).<sup>1</sup>

Ozick's particular argument is that "whatever was specific they made generic" (85). Under the demolishing pressure of popular media, the diary was de-historicized into a story exemplifying the universality of being human. Anne was removed from her situated position as a Jewish witness to and victim of the Nazis' horrific actions, and her diary has been recast as a love story of innocence and purity. As Margaret Sönsen Breen explains, the modifications of Anne's narrative has created the image of Anne as "a universal child whose 'politics of location' (to borrow Adrienne Rich's important phrase)...need not be considered as crucial to the attempt to understand her through her writing" (45). In these abbreviated versions of her narrative, not only her localised position as a Jew but also her gendered experience is attenuated. As Berteke Waaldijk explains, "Most of the passages [that were] left out refer to Anne's experiences as a woman. They have to do with her body, menstruation and sexuality, her conversations with Peter about sex, and her relationship with her mother" (330). Indeed, it seems that the attempts to read *The Diary of Anne Frank* as the multifaceted experience of an actual young woman have been obscured by the pressures to maintain a narrow symbolic role.

This universalisation of her voice and blurring of Anne's situated reality is furthermore apparent in the few psychoanalytic readings of the diary. Texts analysing Anne's sexuality and psychic development depict her story as an exemplar case study of a normal teenage girl. According to G. Scarlett, "The diary of Anne Frank affords one a rare glimpse into the thoughts of an adolescent." It "displays the themes and forms common" at that age and thus can be regarded as an opportunity to understand the normal cognitive teenage development (265). Similarly, E. C. Evert refers to Anne's diary as a testimony of "healthy development" that "demonstrates the feminine developmental progression from spreading excitement to an

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<sup>1</sup> Scholarship that establishes this argument, describes in detail the way Anne Frank's narrative has been distorted in the multiple publications of the diary. This process of politically modifying the diary began with Anne Frank's own father, Otto and then continued for many different reasons by numerous editors, translators, dramatists, legislators and the public itself. Elaborating the multiple censoring of the original text is beyond the scope of this essay. For further reading please see Bernard; Gilman; Goldstein; Loewy and Ozick.

increasingly stable sense of a fertile creative inner space after menarche” (114). K. Dalsimer explains that “[e]ven under these circumstances, we see the familiar processes of adolescent development.” In her view, Anne’s testimony reveals the “classic statement of the revival of oedipal passions” (495), and thus the diary becomes a validating proof for the psychoanalytic theory of female adolescent development.

In describing the significance of situating any piece of writing, Rich recognizes that theory must always go back to “the earth” (to quote her words) in order to take into account the politics of location, the intersectionality from which any utterance begins. Interpreting Anne’s story as a classic illustration of the female adolescent development repudiates exactly the parts of her narrative that are localised and specific. In such readings, Anne’s psychic development is analysed independently from her traumatised situation as a Holocaust witness in a way that problematically reconstructs her localised gendered experience into a textbook case study of emerging womanhood. In such analyses, as Catherine Bernard has argued, a Holocaust testimony can be understood as written either “as a witness or as a woman, but not as both” (21).

As I will elaborate in this essay, Anne’s testimony reveals a process of growing into womanhood that is inherently intertwined with her hidden position in the secret annex. It is in fact her situated location as a young woman, a Jewish teenager, born in Germany and hiding in Amsterdam, that has granted her the ability to creatively express herself, transforming her writing into a radical and critical process of becoming. Within the sheltered space of the diary and with growing awareness of being silenced, Anne articulates a different process of becoming a woman – one that challenges the multiple gender oppressions of her specific location.

### ***INside/OUTside***

In one of the first entries to the diary, Anne records selecting which of her personal belongings she would bring with her into hiding. “[F]irst thing I stuck in was this diary,” she writes, “*Memories mean more to me than dresses*” (20, emphasis added). This statement describes Anne’s major life change, moving from the *outer* social realm, where she was a part of the cultural fabric, able to enjoy the outdoor fresh air, into an *inner* space of a closed and hidden attic.

On July 1942, Anne’s family, her parents and older sister, moved into hiding. They fled from the abyss of German occupation, and were later joined by four other people, to find refuge in the back attic of a warehouse in Amsterdam. In a time of war and destruction, when her previous existence was about to be lost, Anne embraces her diary. Addressing an imaginary recipient named Kitty, she acknowledges that the essence that will remain important to her is not on the outside but on the inside; not superficial appearance but deep memories, which will be obtained through writing. Alongside the actual change of relocating her life in hiding, Anne’s psychic shift can be heard—a movement from an extrovert adolescent world to a space of writing, reflection, and thought preserved in the secrecy of the annex.

While the adolescent period entails an intense movement from the intimate familial space toward the social realm, Anne’s life is taking a different turn and she is forced to encapsulate her

existence in a closed attic. Peter Blos has described the process of gradually abandoning the primary parental love object to reform new emotional and sexual relationships with peer group members during puberty (1-14). In this developmental state, he explains, revival of the oedipal complex becomes the conflicted grounds for channelling libidinal impulses into new interaction with peer groups. Youthful rebellion, the re-emergence of the conflict with the parents, is part of what Blos has called “the secondary individuation process,” in which the adolescent gradually forms her (or his) self-identity and establishes a secure sense of self and a coherent voice.

According to feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan, this process of individuation and secure separation has another side to it, especially when it comes to girls (ix-xxvii). She describes the process in the life of women in which their voice is lost, or to put it bluntly, silenced. As she sees it, this painful transition is forcefully grounded during puberty when social accord is enhanced and psychic attention is shifted from the intimate family unit to society and peer group cohort. Girls enter adolescence confident and assured in their own voice, but gradually censor themselves as they become aware of dominant patriarchal perceptions. Those that insist on maintaining their own voice and remain outspoken often find themselves labelled as troublemakers. Thus, Gilligan explains, a split is formed in the adolescent psyche in which their coherent voice is muted and becomes secretive. To avoid being excluded, they tend to hide their selves, to conceal their experience of the world, and accommodate an external voice that is congruent with the dominant way of thinking.

An echo of such an internal rift can be heard in Anne’s description of a series of pre-hiding incidents in which she was repeatedly reprimanded for her behaviour in class. The teacher referred to her as “A Chatterbox,” and asked her to write an essay on the topic of incessant talking. Anne drew on her sense of humour and wit to present an argument “that talking is a female trait and that I would do my best to keep it under control, but I would never be able to break myself of the habit...there’s not much you can do about inherited traits” (11). In her answer Anne employed a mimetic strategy that enabled her to keep on talking while at the same time acknowledging the hegemonic perception of women’s speech being pointless.

Throughout her diary, Anne is preoccupied with this conflict, struggling to find a way to be heard. She moves back and forth between speaking her mind and keeping her thoughts to herself. When she decides to speak out, she is often considered headstrong, loud, and selfish. Other times she chooses to remain silent. “I’m afraid they’ll mock me,” she explains to Kitty. “[They’ll] think I’m ridiculous and sentimental and not take me seriously.” That is why, she continues, “I’m split in two” (334-335).

## **Spatial Politics**

While veiled from the violence of the outside world, the Franks inhabited a small and crowded annex with constant restrictions on their daily routine, limited supplies and increasing fear of being caught. Confined to a narrow space that was both a sanctuary and a prison, they were totally dependent on their Christian helpers and lived in an enforced intimacy with four

other people. Adults and children alike shared the responsibility of hiding—muting their voices, restricting their movements and vigilantly managing their behaviour. Curtains had to be shut during daytime; opening a window had to be limited; flushing the toilet was only allowed on certain hours; cooking, eating and even sleeping had to be forethought. With this new reality in the annex, Anne's playful ability to "walk between raindrops," to wittingly humour herself out of complicated power relations, was no longer simple. Vulnerability, weakness, dependency, childlike behaviour, mischievous manipulations were not as tolerated as they were on the outside. The condensed and crowded space was felt not only in the reality of her everyday life but also in Anne's psychic reorganisation.

Upon arrival in their new dwelling, perhaps in an attempt to familiarise herself with the space, Anne describes in detail the spatiality of their hiding annex. In the back attic of a large warehouse, hidden behind a bookcase that concealed its entrance, was a two-floor loft space unseen by the outer world. At first, Anne shared a room with her sister, Margot, and then, when Mr. Dussel (Fritz Pfeffer) arrived, Margot joined the parents in their room, and Anne was compelled to share her intimate space with him. She describes the way he inadvertently expands his living space to invade hers, while at the same time restricting her movements with constant remarks on her behaviour. "Apparently," Anne complains to Kitty, "I'm always making 'too much noise.'" While shushing her and reprimanding her conduct, Mr. Dussel allows himself more freedom. He "switches on the light at the crack of dawn to exercise" and "pushes and bumps" chairs in the room next to Anne's sleeping head (78-79). It seems that although both had to share the burden and responsibilities of their restrictions, the right for space was dissimilar. Mr. Dussel as an adult, a doctor and a man, was entitled to the privacy of the room and to the use of the table for most of the day. He commented freely on Anne's actions and behaviour, repeatedly reminding her of both her gender and her age.

"We must begin," according to Rich, "not with the continent or a country or a house but with the geography closest in – the body" (212). The politics of location commence with the politics of the body – the fantasies, identities and images that dictate its discourse, boundaries, management and invasions. On one occasion, when Anne lay sick, with weakness, sore throat and high fever, it was decided that she would be examined by Mr. Dussel. To Kitty Anne reveals her discomfort with such invasion, but she is unable to liberate her rage beyond the pages of diary: "The worst part was when Mr. Dussel decided to play doctor and lay his pomaded head on my bare chest" (151). While Mr. Dussel could intrude into her most intimate space, her body, she had to tighten herself into the expected dimensions of a young woman, giving freedom to her thoughts only within the secretive space of the diary.

Forced into sharing a room with Mr. Dussel brought into the foreground a gendered struggle: Anne's inferiority as a young woman in the power relation with an older man. Under the surviving conditions of hiding, what was a productive strategy for Anne on the outside was no longer acceptable on the inside. She could not ask for concessions for being a woman; she could not use a mimetic approach accentuating her femininity (as she did with the "chatterbox" incident); she could not speak of her different needs, her changing body; and she could not

expose her emotional dependency on having a space for writing. Within the increasingly narrowing circles of Anne's life, the diary is not just a space for reflection, mirroring her life in the annex. Under the enforced intimacies of hiding, it gradually turns into her breathing space. It becomes a transformative locus where she can both lose and find herself; hide her secrets and recreate her identity. Guarding her inner life within the pages of the diary is symbolically empowered by the reality of her location in hiding within a secret space, safely camouflaged behind a bookcase.

### **Hidden Between the Pages**

Struggling to find a space to preserve her secret voice, Anne turns to her diary. Since "Paper has more patience than people" (6), she can share her thoughts and feelings with Kitty openly and honestly, without fear of being excluded or criticized. In Anne's descriptions, Kitty is an observer that is interested in her stories; excited to hear her news; concerned for her in the face of fearful events; bored when she repeats herself; and compassionate regarding her suffering. Indeed, Anne refers to Kitty as a real other, a reliable witness to her life under the most exceptional circumstances; someone who provides her with a secure space and the ability to listen to what the outer world cannot hear.

At a time of loss and destruction the diary becomes Anne's own sheltered dimension that not only records and echoes her extraordinary reality but also allows her to creatively develop her world view and inner voice. Under the extreme conditions of Anne's life, the symbolic relationship between inside and outside are modulated through an act of writing that is dynamically linked to the emblem of hiding. Echoing the world outside, the inner realm becomes a precious element that is functioning under an ongoing attack, and needs to be saved and rescued. Just as in the reality of her life where finding a safe hiding place might be the difference between life and death, so it is on a psychic level: she finds refuge in the secrecy of the diary, where she can both hide her inner treasures and save them from oblivion.

According to D. W. Winnicott, playing hide-and-seek reflects a dialectical desire that is fundamental to human experience: the wish to hide ourselves and the longing to be found (1965, 185-187). We all need a secure space to guard and creatively develop our inner treasures. Yet this inner work is relentlessly motivated by the need to communicate it to the outside world. "It is a joy to hide," he continues, "but a disaster not to be found" (1965, 186). Throughout the text, the fantasy of Anne's words breaking free from their cage and reaching a wider audience accompanies her writing. Although, on the one hand, Anne means for the diary to become an intimate space for her thoughts and feelings, on the other hand, she is constantly preoccupied with exposing it. "[J]ust imagine," she asks Kitty with enthusiasm, "how interesting it would be if I were to publish a novel about the Secret Annex" (244). The prospect of her deepest thoughts revealed to the world fuels the creativity of her writing. For Anne, who faces traumatic reality, the diary serves as what Winnicott refers to as "a potential space" – an intermediate zone of experience that functions as a dimension of vague boundaries between inside and outside (1971, 1-25). This third space facilitates a dynamic movement between fantasy and reality, which

enables the subject to simultaneously invent the object and allow its independent existence. By writing the diary, Anne creatively experiences herself, and expresses her deepest feelings and fantasies to an other who is both a fiction of her own imagination and a promise to be heard and seen. The diary becomes a space to ingeniously challenge the complex psychic relation between her inside and outside worlds.

### **Intersectional “chains”**

Rachel Feldhay Brenner writes, “The poignancy of [Anne] Frank’s writing emerges from her awareness of the terrifying historical reality in which she is writing her life story” (22). Anne’s specific intersectional location—as a young woman, a German-Jew hiding in Amsterdam—formulates the unique position of the diary as a creative space for expression and experimentation.

Applying the politics of location to the analysis of Anne’s psychic development, my task must take into account the position that allows her writing to exist as well as the silencing and censorships that have muted her words. As I have shown, in many of the references to her story, Anne’s narrative has been lifted from the grounds of her intersectional location. Various publications and discussions of the diary have distorted, omitted and silenced parts of her writing under a universalising movement. In spite all these castrating censorships, a simple fact remains true: Anne was able to write and her words have not only been published but become a cornerstone of Holocaust literature. She was fortunate to have an internal and external space in which she was able to express herself in a way that many other Jewish children during the war were incapable of. Anne’s words have broken free from the chains of her hiding place and reached unmatched fame.

A narrative of such a complicated position that is both oppressed and privileged can be heard throughout the Franks’ family history. Anne was the daughter of an affluent bourgeois and secular Jewish family, well assimilated in German society. Her mother, Edith was born to a wealthy Jewish family and her father, Otto, was the son of a bank owner, well established and prosperous. In 1933 due to growing segregation and oppression of Jewish people in Germany, Otto Frank decided to immigrate to Holland, where he had commercial connections that enabled him to establish a business and find a temporary refuge for his family.

Though born in Germany, Anne spent most of her childhood in Holland and experienced herself as Dutch. In 1940, when Germany invaded the Netherlands, the persecution of Jews arrived with increasingly restrictive and discriminatory laws. Although for a while the family’s financial and social position allowed a relatively comfortable life, Anne describes in her diary a narrowing circle that had been increasingly closing in on her freedom: “After May 1940 the good times were few and far between,” she writes. “...Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees” (8).

Finding a shelter for the second time was once again due a great deal to Anne’s father’s position and connections. Otto Frank managed to prevent the confiscation of his company by

transferring his shares and directorship to his business partners. This process allowed the business to continue and enabled him to plan the family hiding in the back attic of the company's warehouse and offices. Under increasingly horrific reality Anne was able to sit by her window safely hidden but achingly watching the growing brutality that took place on the outside: "In the evenings when it's dark," she writes in her diary, "I often see long lines of good, innocent people, accompanied by crying children, walking on and on ... until they nearly drop. No one is spared" (69).

Hiding for Anne was double-edged. It provided a restrictive safety that left her feeling enchained. "We're Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights," she complains to Kitty (261). Alongside her dread of the horrors committed against Jews outside the walls of her hiding space, she shares with Kitty her unbearable feelings of imprisonment. Knowing that she is fortunate to be alive, she feels ungrateful for missing her previous childlike world in which she was free move without restraint; to speak and laugh out loud. "Whenever someone comes in from outside," she admits to Kitty, "with the wind in their clothes and the cold on their cheeks, I feel like burying my head under the blankets to keep from thinking, 'When will we be allowed to breathe fresh air again?'" (153).

Having a space for writing allows Anne to embark on a self-reflecting process that induces a comprehension of not only her misfortune but also her privilege. In witnessing the growing horrors outside her window, she gradually realizes the difference between her situation and that of so many others destined to be tortured and led to their death. Growing feelings of guilt appear in Anne's dreams, wherein she repeatedly sees her school friend, Hanneli, asking to be saved. Anne ponders the vulnerability around her with introspective questioning that achingly compels her to contemplate the ethicality of her position: "why," she asks Kitty, "why have I been chosen to live, while she's probably going to die? What's the difference between us?" (149). The process of writing allows Anne to search for a way to bear the unbearable, to think about the unthinkable, and to face the constantly growing human monstrosities with poignant accountability of her own.

### **Soft Cheek**

The diary provides Anne the space to explore the "double bind" of her "chains" in hiding—chains that are both restrictive and preserving. During the process of writing, she comes to experience these chains not only as racialized but also as gendered. Anne's need to break free from her confined space in hiding discloses her desire for a maternal embrace and grants her the freedom to discover her sexuality in ways that cannot be reduced to any normative narrative of growing into womanhood.

In the process of exploring her "double edged chains," Anne becomes increasingly preoccupied with her relationship with her mother. Torn between growing hopelessness and her sense of gratitude for being alive, she approaches her mother for advice. Edith Frank does not recognise her daughter's pain in witnessing the suffering outside the annex's walls. She explains



to Anne that she should just “[t]hink about all the suffering in the world and be thankful [she’s] not part of it” (211). With a growing feeling of despair, Anne is troubled by her mother’s ability to seal her heart to suffering. For a long while, they are both, as she says, “caught in a vicious circle of unpleasantness and sorrow” (158). Her writing records a continual rage towards her mother, an emotional rollercoaster, consisting of anger, insults and hostility without any soft and intimate encounter between them.

With the increasing estrangement, Anne describes an ambivalent emotional position that moves between resentment and dependency. Although she clearly articulates feelings of aggression towards her mother, she simultaneously longs for her recognition and love: “I can’t stand Mother.” She shares her anger with Kitty: “I have to force myself not to snap at her all the time and to stay calm, when I’d rather slap her across the face” (50). Yet underneath all that rage, she confesses, “I miss – every day and every hour of the day—having a mother who understands me” (154). In the loneliness of the annex, she yearns for a mother who is less focused on fixing her behaviours to accommodate the outer world.

In many of her writings, Luce Irigaray portrays the enslavement of the mother-daughter relationship to the patriarchal structure and points to the way that women become objects in the dominant relation between men (15-51). As she explains, with the disappearance of women’s genealogy, mothers and daughters can only relate to each other as competitors for the one position designated for them under the oedipal structure—that of an object, a silent mirror to echo masculinity. Under patriarchal law, mothers are forced to teach their daughters to forget the intimate relationship between women, and daughters are obligated to forgo their mothers’ love in order to be able to enter the symbolic order. From this viewpoint, Anne’s frustration and ambivalent rage can be understood as the outcome of the rift that patriarchal culture enforces on mother-daughter relations. Within the strict surviving atmosphere of the annex, the governing rules of patriarchy are heightened with decreasing tolerance for maternal touch. In the context of this accentuated culture, Anne’s conflicted reaction proves to be a symptomatic marker of repressing the ancient lineage of women.

Witnessing the horrors from her window, Anne realizes that “the hell,” as she puts it, does not stay on the outside, but comes from the inside. A series of dreams follow at the tail end of 1943, in the midst of what was probably the most emotionally difficult time at the annex. Under these circumstances, Anne has a dream, which she describes as vivid and powerful: “Peter’s eyes suddenly met mine... And then *I felt a soft, oh-so-cool and gentle cheek against mine*, and it felt so good, so good” (162-163, emphasis added). A while later, Anne writes to Kitty about a similar dream she had: “I dreamed we were kissing each other, but *Peter’s cheeks were very disappointing: they weren’t as soft as they looked*. They were more like Father’s cheeks, the cheeks of a man who already shaves” (213, emphasis added).

Longing for the “soft cheek,” Anne wishes for a tender touch to soften the rough edges that have taken over her inner life. It is with a language of sharp and thorny prickliness that she constantly describes the relationship with her mother. “She hurls at me day after day,” she explains in her diary, “piercing me like arrows from a tightly strung bow” (81). On one occasion,

she describes, “A pin! Mother had patched the blanket and forgotten to take it out. ...just to tease her I said, ‘Du bist doch eine echte Rabenmutter’ [Oh, you are cruel]” (184). The prickly cheek, just like a needle in the soft blanket, can be thought to represent a promise for maternal embrace that does not materialize between them. Although it is Peter who appears in the dream, we might interpret it not as a desire for a man (or, within the context of psychoanalysis, a man’s phallus), but as a need for a mother (or again, within psychoanalytic terms, a maternal breast). It is, after all, his “*soft* cheek” (emphasis added) for which she longs.

Whereas a traditional psychoanalytic perspective portrays an oedipal process in which the mother is repudiated with rage for not giving the girl a penis (or a phallus), Anne’s dream reveals a different developmental course. As she searches for tenderness and recognition, her passionate longing for maternal embrace is displaced and projected onto a male figure. This shift can be thought of through the psychoanalytic understanding of Julia Kristeva, who conceptualises the identification with the Symbolic Order—father, for both boys and girls—as deeply rooted in the emotional relationship with the mother. As she sees it, maternal love and the identification with the mother are the psychic grounds for the relationship with the father. Under patriarchal phallogocentric culture, she explains, the origin of this fundamental emotional structure has to be forgotten and the archaic identification with maternal subjectivity is replaced by an imagery of a lack, an absence that can only be filled by the phallus.<sup>2</sup> From this perspective, Peter’s cheek appears in the dream as a moderator for Anne’s yearning for maternal softness, intimacy and recognition.

Anne’s sincere testimony of her thoughts, feelings and dreams not only challenges the traditional psychoanalytic oedipal model but also brings to the foreground questions concerning sexuality and desire. On the same day she has the dream, Anne confesses to Kitty,

Sometimes when I lie in bed at night I feel a terrible urge to touch my breasts ... Once when I was spending the night at Jacque’s, I could no longer restrain my curiosity about her body, which she’d always hidden from me. I asked her whether, as proof of our friendship, we could touch each other’s breasts. .... I also had a terrible desire to kiss her, which I did. Every time I see a female nude ... I go into ecstasy. (161).

It seems that Anne’s psychic imagery dynamically shifts between different objects of desire and quickly moves from “Peter’s soft cheek” to her own breasts, to the memory of attraction to her girlfriend Jacque, to her excitement of the female nude body. Her fluid imagination quickly alters and a fantasy for different forms of the female body is deeply knotted with what later on materialises as an object of desire in Anne’s reality. The ability to move from her craving for a “breast” to the image of Peter’s “soft cheek” enables the formation of her desire towards Peter and provides the cultivating tissue for their relationship to take shape.

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<sup>2</sup> I am referring here specifically to the way Kelly Oliver reads Kristeva. For further reading see: Oliver, Kelly. “Kristeva’s Sadomasochistic Subject and the Sublimation of Violence.” *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*, 21(1), (2013): 13-26.

One might wonder how Anne's sexuality would evolve if she had lived to reach adulthood, a question that can only be speculated on and will remain unanswered. Still, her malleable shifting desire and her ability to identify herself with variable forms of sexual expressions calls for analytic reflection. In the confined space of the annex, and with the diary as a creative transformative locus, Anne is able to reveal her own "cheekiness" and formulate her sexuality in a way that challenges traditional concepts of growing into womanhood.

### **Coming Out of Hiding**

Concealed inside the annex walls, protected from the horrific reality of the outside world, the symbolism of hiding plays an important role in Anne's need to free herself from oppressions. Both women's and Jews' suffering are integrated under the same symbol – which functions as a cameo in her psychic development—that of going underground, of hiding. In this dynamic psychical growth, the diary becomes a space for creative sexual experimentation facilitating Anne's process of ingeniously redefining her desire.

In a society that refuses to signify the experience of women, Gilligan writes, their voices go into hiding, descending beneath the surface into the depths of the psyche. Within a culture that does not value their world view and knowledge, they are forced into silence and their voices are muted in the social realm to become secretive. Irigaray's descriptions of women's experience employ a similar picture of disappearance. Using the myth of Demeter and Persephone, she demonstrates the forgetfulness of mother-daughter relationships under patriarchal culture. Persephone, abducted and forced to descend to the underworld, leaves her mother in a painful state of suffering. Demeter has no words to express her sorrow for her daughter's disappearance, and so, winter becomes her symptom, and the upper world is covered with white snow. For Anne, within the context of hiding, writing allows her to register her own winter of missing maternal embrace and creatively explore her desire to liberate her voice as a woman from the "underworld" of silence. Following the "soft cheek" dream, Anne begins to form an intimate relationship with Peter in which she finds strength to challenge basic conceptions of female sexuality.

As Anne's sister, Margot, clarifies, an intimate relationship with a man "would have to be [with] someone I felt was intellectually superior" (229). Similar concerns are raised by her father, who explains that "[i]n matters like these, it's always the man who takes the active role, and it's up to the woman to set the limits" (277). Knowing that girls are meant to find their intimacy in hierarchical relations in which men take the upper hand, and women are not supposed to be actively passionate, Anne is constantly ambivalent about the different course her relationship with Peter is taking. "I'm still torn with guilt," she confesses to Kitty. "... I know very well that he was my conquest, and not the other way around" (330). "Is it right?" she asks herself, "Is it right for me to be so passionate? to be filled with as much passion and desire as Peter? Can I, a girl, allow myself to go that far?" (275). How is it possible for a woman to be as passionate as a man?

Anne wonders about this question referring to her unique position confined outside the social realm: “Oh, Anne, how terribly shocking! But seriously, I don’t think it’s at all shocking; we’re cooped up here, cut off from the world, anxious and fearful, especially lately. ...Why shouldn’t I do what my heart tells me ...?” (267). Chained to the attic, Anne’s unconscious wish to break free of gender inhibitions surges forth, and with these words, she finds the strength to disobey cultural demand regarding gender norms.

Locked away from social and peer group pressures that accompany most teenage relationships, Anne allows herself to be actively seductive, frequently leading their conversations and raising the subject of female sexuality. “In women, the genitals, or whatever they’re called, are hidden” (236), she admits to Kitty. Yet, she refuses to keep it all tucked away in silence and looks for a way to explain to Peter that,

When you’re standing up, all you see from the front is hair. Between your legs there are two soft, cushiony things .... They separate when you sit down, and they’re very red and quite fleshy on the inside. In the upper part, between the outer labia, there’s a fold of skin that, on second thought, looks like a kind of blister. That’s the clitoris ... (236-237)

Anne continues to describe the female sexual organs in great length. This detailed description should be contemplated beyond the dominant psychoanalytic perspective, whereby female sexuality is reduced to a fantasy of being penetrated by a man. Her brave outlining of the female body can be understood in terms of her desire to articulate her different way of thinking; to expose what is predominantly considered secretive and shameful; and, within the context of her reality as a Jew, to bring herself out of hiding. She wishes for her inner experience, her inner voice, her world view, and her sense of being to be heard, and for her inner organs to be recognized and seen.

Anne’s dreams and her active role in the relationship with Peter are part of an evolving process in which she gradually establishes an ability to speak her world view out loud, to bring to light her different experience as a woman. Anne’s marginalised position outside the social realm grants her an admirable courage to fight oppressions. She wants to be recognized and seen; she aspires to be remembered; she yearns for her inner world to break free from its oppressive chains. “Can you tell me why people go to such lengths to hide their real selves?” (170), she asks Kitty, and then she shares her decision: “I’ll take every opportunity to speak openly” (172). She explores her attraction to women, raises questions about “the way things are,” and critically speculates about love, relationships, children’s upbringing, marriage and the social position of women.

Looking at the world through the key hole and confiding in Kitty, Anne gradually realizes the valuable assets she possesses and acknowledges the intersectionality of her oppressions—it’s not only her Jewishness but also patriarchal chains that she is untangling. “I know that I’m a woman,” she writes, “a woman with inward strength and plenty of courage. If God lets me live ... I’ll make my voice heard!” (262).

## De-Archiving Anne Frank

Contemplating Anne's process of liberating her voice in relation to the multiple "sanitising" publications that have taken ownership of her story, one might wonder about the way her desire to break free from hiding is still hindered by a silencing paralysis. Although her dream to become a famous writer has materialized, even after her death, parts of her narrative, specifically her experience as a woman, continue to be concealed and censored. The diary's multiple re-publications have only further expressed the fact that an emancipation of her voice has been, in a way, neurotically repudiated.

Anne Frank's diary was never finished. Its vitality was abruptly discontinued on 4 August 1944, when the secret Annex was stormed by German soldiers and its dwellers arrested. Anne never concluded her writing nor was she able to record the last months of her life. The untold, unwritten component of the diary, as Ozick explains, is precisely these dreadful last months of her life, when no words existed. The diary's legacy is that of a girl that suffered and died under the most dreadful conditions. "A survivor recalled," Ozick continues, that Margot, "fell dead to the ground from the wooden slab on which she lay, eaten by lice, and that Anne, heartbroken and skeletal, naked under a bit of rag, died a day or two later" (78).

While Ozick is right in identifying that "[t]he diary's keen lens is helplessly opaque to the diarist's explicit doom" (79), from a psychoanalytic perspective, it is exactly the uncanniness of her doom that obscured its lenses. Paradoxically, it is Anne's unspeakable death that created the diary as a hopeful fountain of life; it is her painfully unbearable ending under the most extreme cruelty that made her into a symbol of faith in the human spirit; and it is the singularity of her location that founded her universalised generic image. Ironically, precisely her extraordinary circumstances as a young woman in hiding, witnessing the most horrific reality have created Anne's archived narrative as a monument for a normal teenage story.

The uncompromising attempts to find catharsis in her narrative and the restlessness of her unspeakable death can both find an echo in the continual retelling of the diary. These multiple controversial attempts to commemorate the vital words of a girl, a young woman, who, not yet sixteen, was brutally murdered, just one month before liberation, can be understood via what Jacques Derrida has called "*mal de archive*" (9-63). The various enterprises of commemorating the diary seem to reveal the agonizing conflicted mechanism of an "archive fever." As Derrida explains in an interview with Michal Ben-Naftali, an archiving project is an act of memory "performed to prevent this [past] from being erased. But at the same time, which is ambiguous and horrifying, it is the very act of archiving which contributes somehow to classification, relativization and forgetting" (Ben-Naftali 11).

An archive fever means having a compulsive, repetitive and nostalgic desire to return to the origin, a homesickness for the "most archaic place of absolute commencement" (Derrida 57), which gets so caught up in its desire to preserve and guard that it strangles the vitality out of every piece of evidence; until it repeats its primary fear—revealing that this past is always already dead. As Brenner elaborates, for Anne herself, the diary is an immanent creation of meanings in the face of an apocalyptic future. Rather than being a cathartic response to the

Holocaust, it is an aching resistance to the probability of eternal silence. Her encounter with the vulnerability of life within the prospect of her own death facilitates the painful and courageous act of speaking the unspeakable.<sup>3</sup> “I want to go on living even after my death,” Anne announces to Kitty. “And that’s why I’m so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that’s inside me!” (250). The act of writing arises from Anne’s particular reality in what Brenner has called “the present of an ultimate ending” (25). Under the complexity of her localised position in hiding, Anne is creating words to defy consistent silencing oppressions. As a Jew, as not—yet a woman, living within an uncanny state of mortal nonexistence, she embarks upon an artistic voyage that can be thought of as a creative refusal to be archived. In the uncanny reality of her life, the diary provides an experimental locus, an intimate creative space in which Anne’s story will never be finished and thus can stay relentlessly open to new meanings. If an act of archivization springs out of an anxious need to seal off the diary from the horrific reality of the Holocaust and to sanitise it from any “live” memory of oppression, Anne’s writing is rooted in a growing awareness of the political locations of her reality, a rising consciousness of her being hidden and silenced, particularly as a woman.

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<sup>3</sup>Brenner suggests that “the Diary is a work of art, which defies the fearful hiatus that brought it into being. It is not *our* evasion of the horror that should read optimism into Frank’s life narrative. It is, rather, *her* valiant artistic accomplishment and *her* courageous ethical vision that inscribes the fortitude of humanism into her story of fear and despair” (22).

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